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(54) **SYSTEMS, METHODS AND APPARATUSES
FOR ENSURING PROXIMITY OF WIFI
COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

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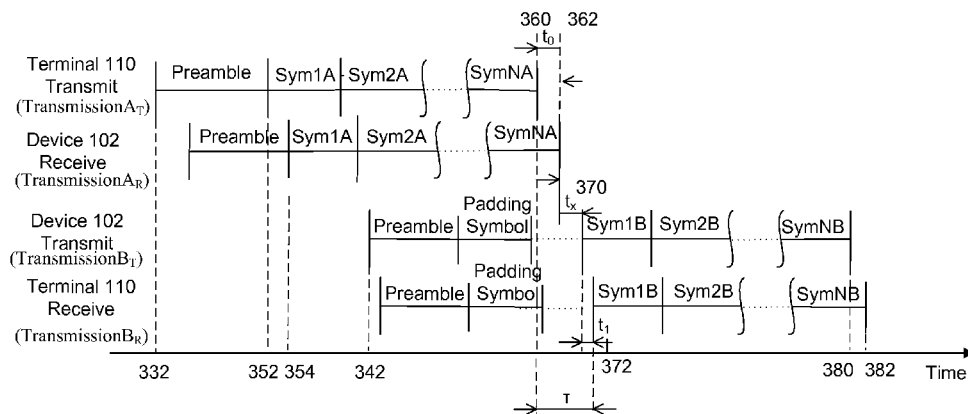
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ABSTRACT

The systems, methods and apparatuses described herein provide an apparatus configured for ensuring proximity of a communication partner. In one aspect, the apparatus may comprise a communication port and a processor. The processor may be configured to send a request to and receive a response from the communication partner via the communication port using modulated signals, measure a time period between sending and receiving using timings of modulated signals' symbols, and receive a secondary value from the communication partner. The secondary value may be verified to include at least a portion of the request and a portion of the response, and may have been sent with authenticating data to authenticate it. The time period may be compared with a predefined threshold calculated based on a predefined maximum allowed distance to the communication partner. In another aspect, an apparatus may be configured to ensure its proximity to a communication partner.

32 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets



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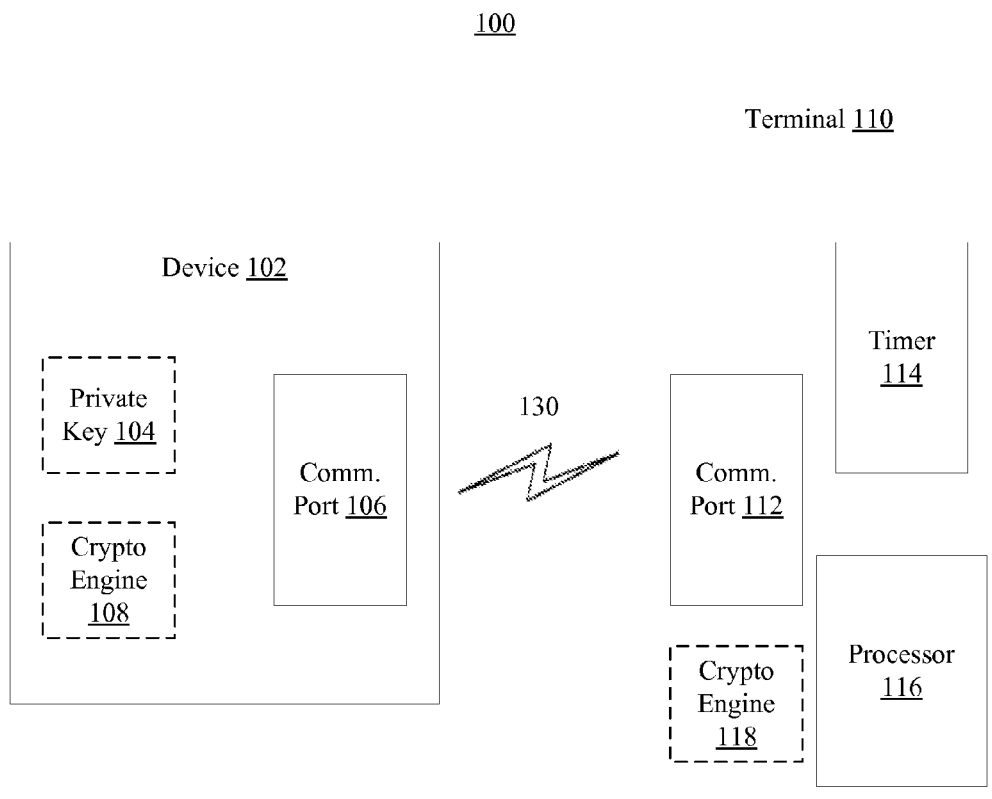


FIG. 1

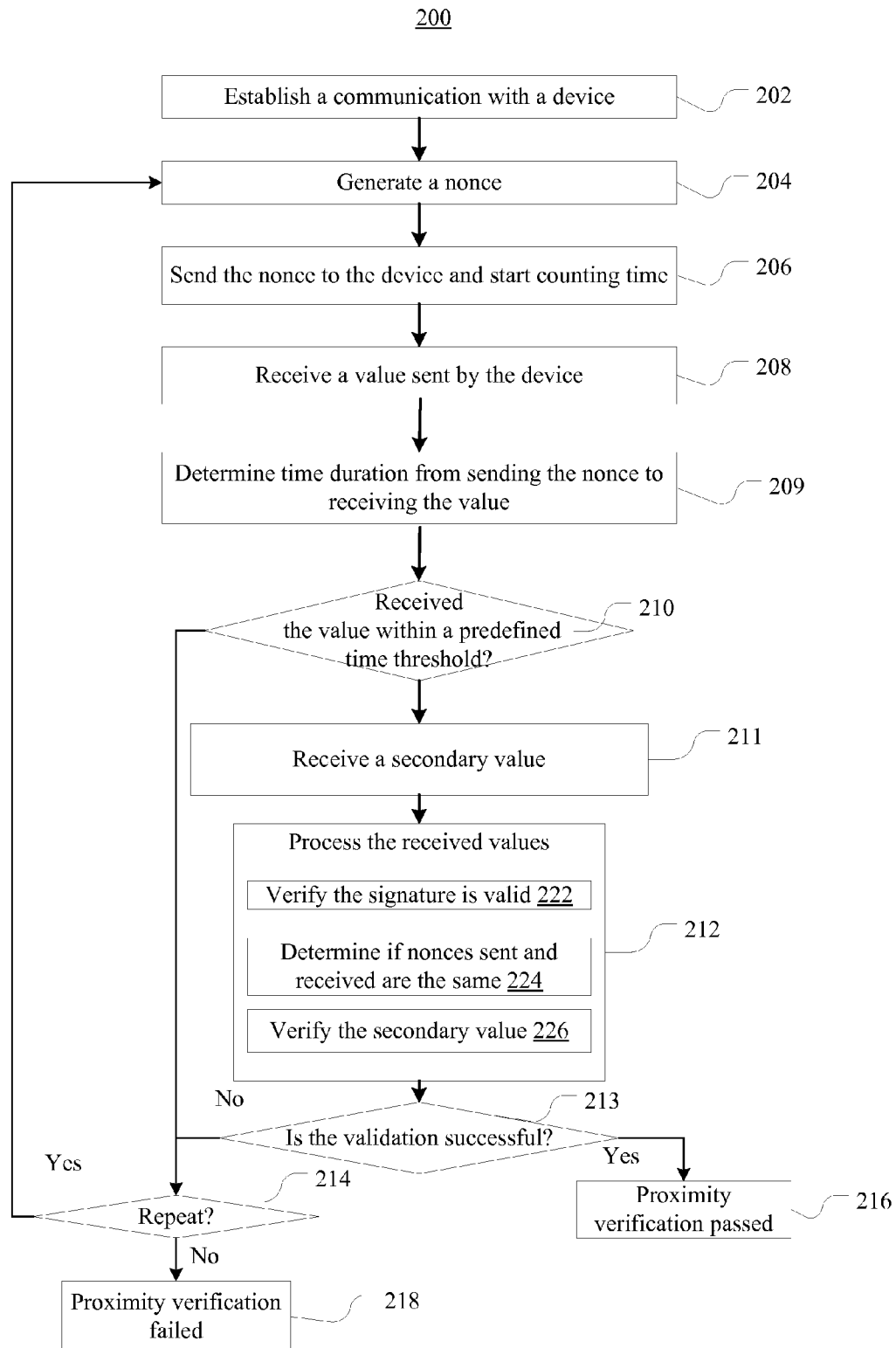
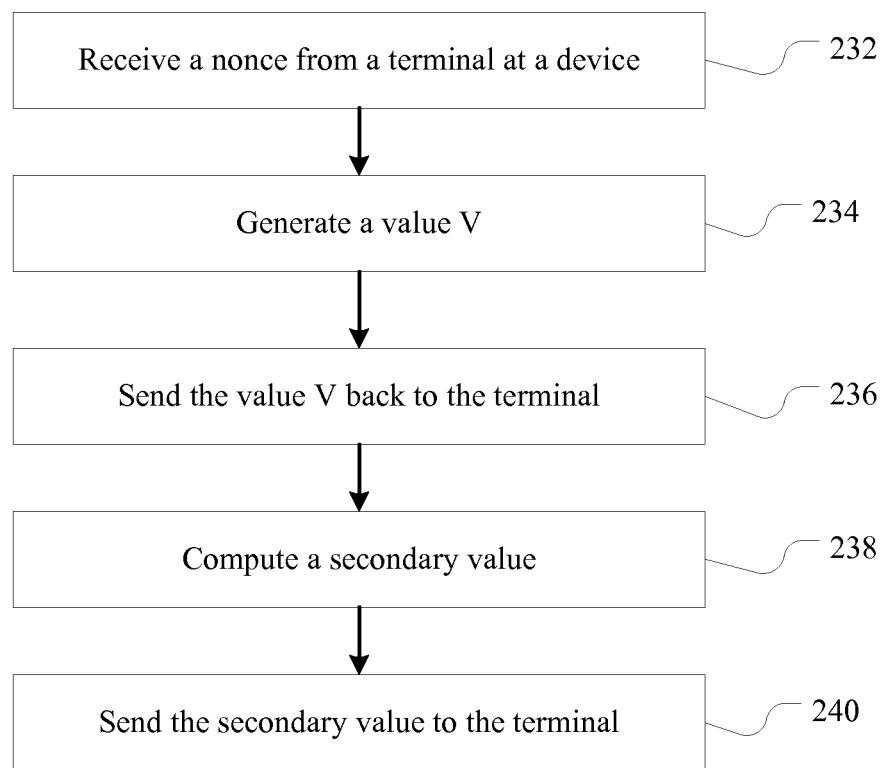


FIG. 2A

230**FIG. 2B**

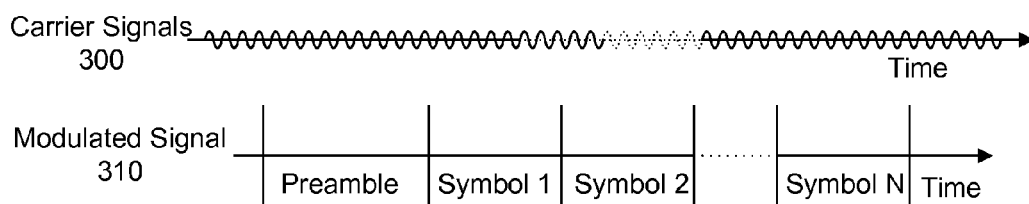


FIG. 3A

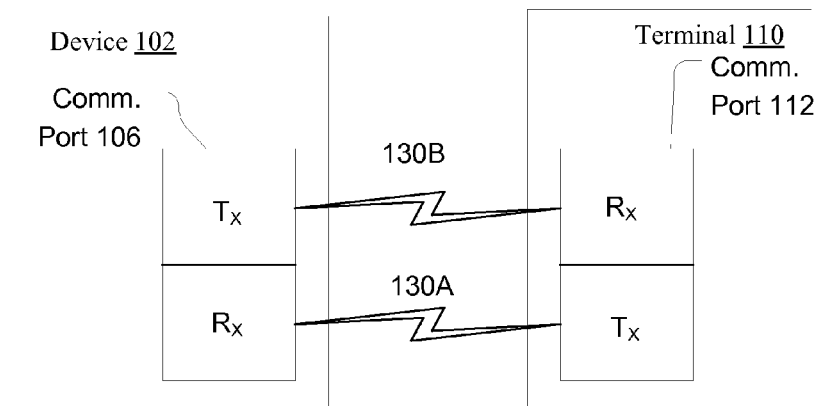


FIG. 3B

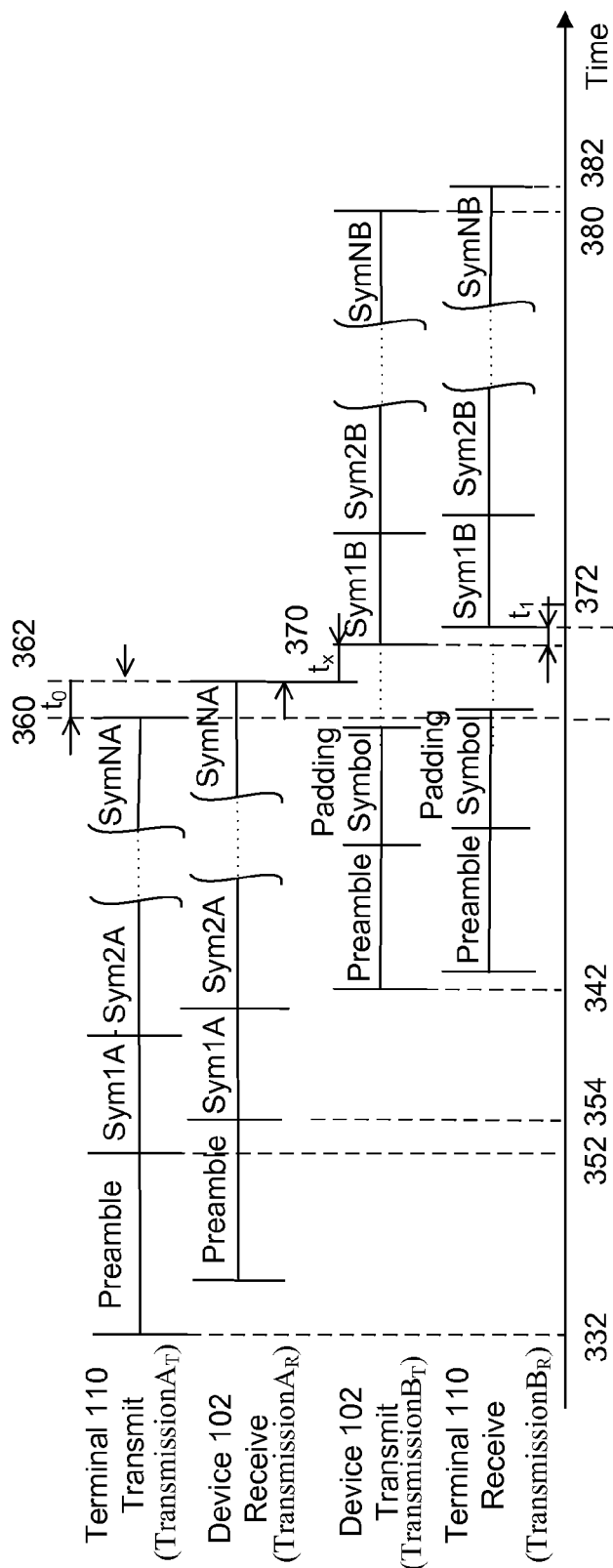


FIG. 3C

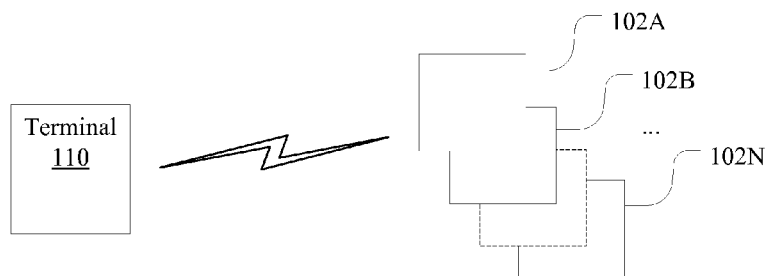


FIG. 4A

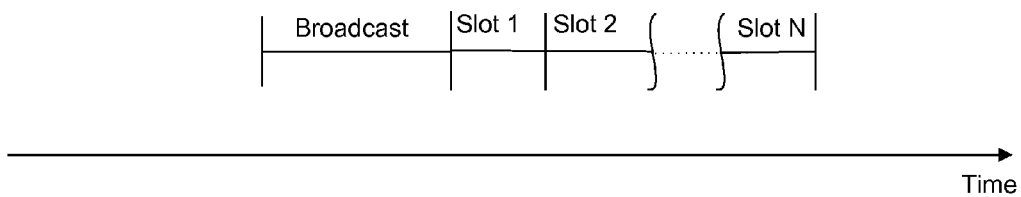
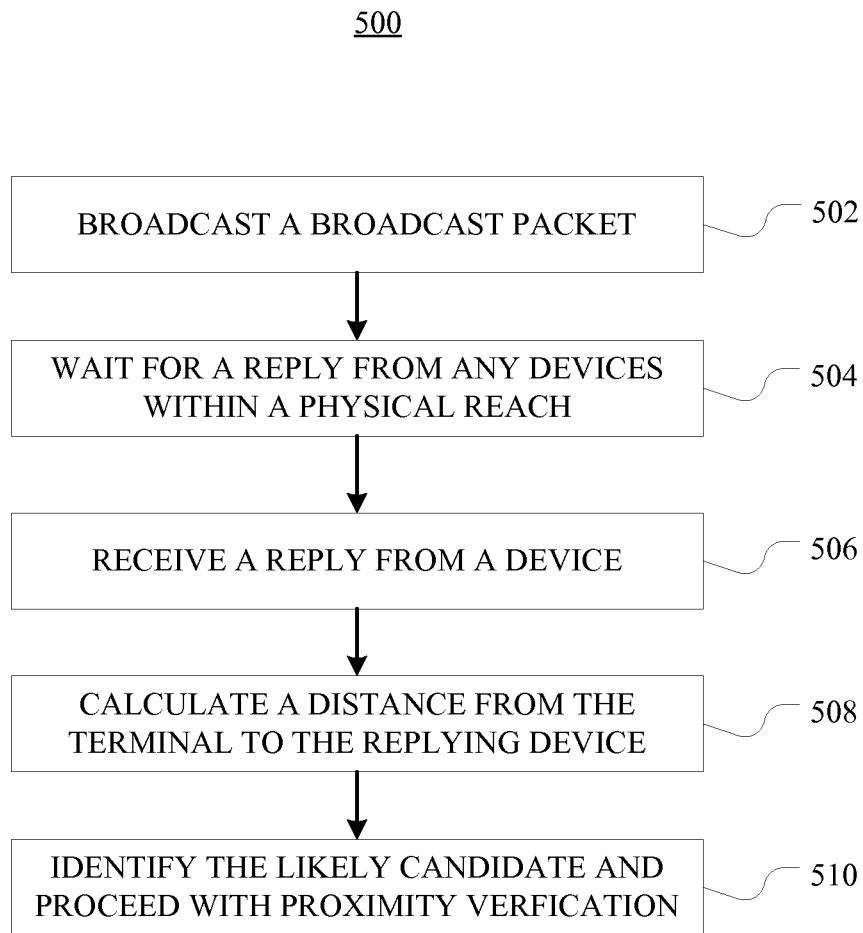


FIG. 4B

**FIG. 5**

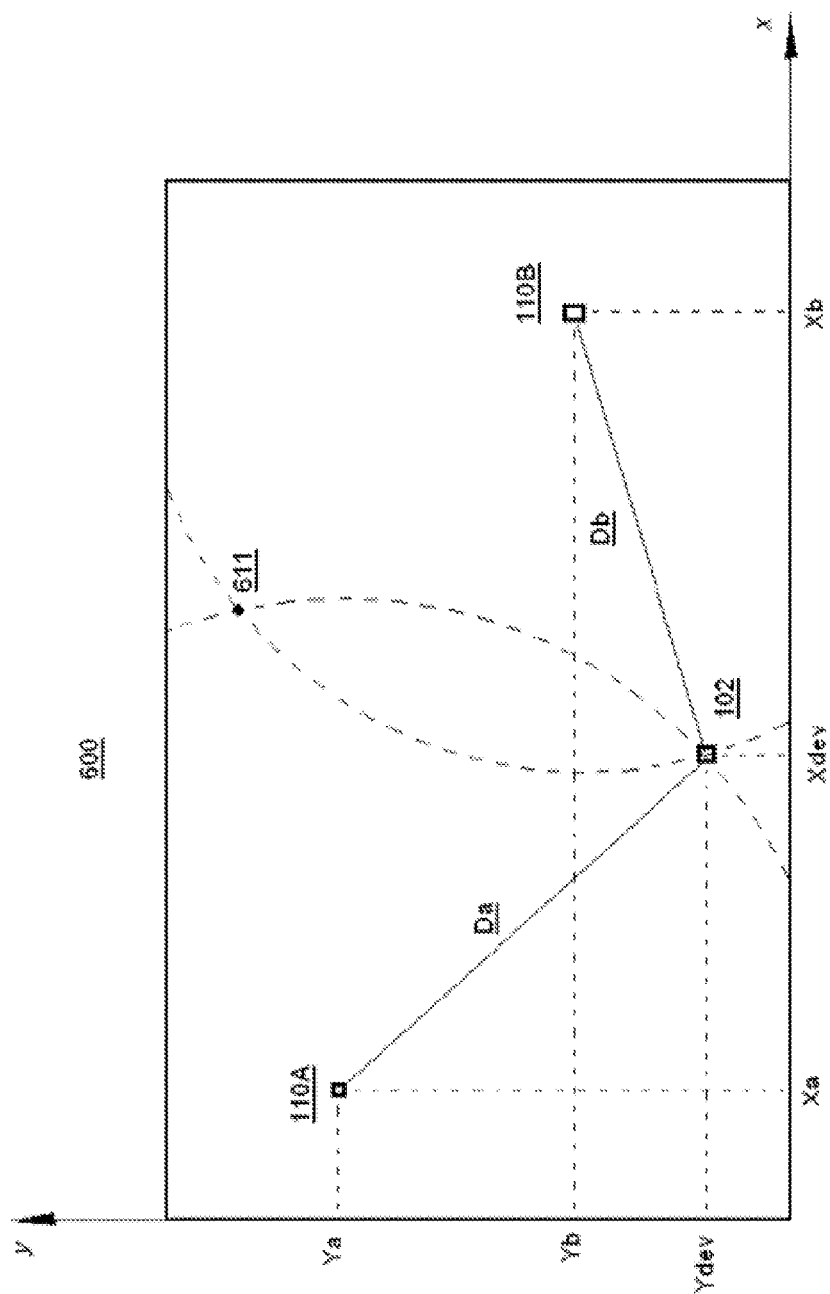


Fig. 6

1

SYSTEMS, METHODS AND APPARATUSES FOR ENSURING PROXIMITY OF WIFI COMMUNICATION DEVICES

RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/821,962, filed May 10, 2013, entitled "SYSTEMS, METHODS AND APPARATUSES FOR ENSURING PROXIMITY OF WIFI COMMUNICATION DEVICES," the content of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE DISCLOSURE

The systems, methods and apparatuses described herein relate to data communication between electronic devices, and in particular, ensuring that communication devices are within a predetermined proximity of one another.

BACKGROUND

There is a need in the art to determine whether two devices that are communicating with one another are within a predetermined proximity of each other. This need may be based on a desire to ensure that two devices remain physically proximate, or based on a desire to enhance security by reducing the possibility of certain types of malicious attacks. With respect to the former, for example, one may want to ensure that an electronic monitoring device worn by a person on bail, or an electronic tracking device located on an automobile, remains within a predefined or predetermined distance of a monitoring station or monitoring terminal.

With respect to the latter scenario, while physical proximity of devices communicating with one another may enhance the security of the communication there is a need to ensure that the devices are actually proximate. For example, wireless communication technologies (such as, for example, Near-Field Communication (NFC), or WiFi) may be used in the process of establishing a secure communication channel between two devices. As one example, two devices with the wireless communication capabilities may be brought close to each other to exchange encryption keys for establishing a secure sockets layer (SSL) session. Due to the physical constraints of such wireless communication methods, it is believed that the key exchange can only happen between devices that are physically located close to each other. However, various attacks still may pose serious security threats. For example, a relay attack (a variation of the man-in-the-middle attack) may be performed by using a fake terminal or hot spot equipped with signal re-transmitters to re-transmit the communication signal while the legitimate communication partner may be located far away.

Therefore, there is a need in the art for ensuring a communication partner at the other end of a communication link is within a predefined physical proximity.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an exemplary system according to the present disclosure.

FIG. 2A is a flow diagram illustrating an exemplary method for verifying a communication partner according to the present disclosure.

FIG. 2B is a flow diagram illustrating another exemplary method for verifying a communication partner according to the present disclosure.

2

FIG. 3A is a time sequence diagram illustrating communication signals according to the present disclosure.

FIG. 3B is a block diagram illustrating two partners engaging in communication according to the present disclosure.

FIG. 3C is a time sequence diagram illustrating communication signals being transmitted and received by two partners engaging in communication according to the present disclosure.

FIG. 4A is a block diagram illustrating a system according to the present disclosure.

FIG. 4B is a time sequence diagram illustrating communication signals being transmitted and received according to the present disclosure.

FIG. 5 is a flow diagram illustrating an exemplary method for a communication partner to be selected according to the present disclosure.

FIG. 6 is representation of another exemplary embodiment according to the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Certain illustrative aspects of the systems, apparatuses, and methods according to the present invention are described herein in connection with the following description and the accompanying figures. These aspects are indicative, however, of but a few of the various ways in which the principles of the invention may be employed and the present invention is intended to include all such aspects and their equivalents. Other advantages and novel features of the invention may become apparent from the following detailed description when considered in conjunction with the figures.

In the following detailed description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the invention. In other instances, well known structures, interfaces, and processes have not been shown in detail in order not to unnecessarily obscure the invention. However, it will be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art that those specific details disclosed herein need not be used to practice the invention and do not represent a limitation on the scope of the invention, except as recited in the claims. It is intended that no part of this specification be construed to effect a disavowal of any part of the full scope of the invention. Although certain embodiments of the present disclosure are described, these embodiments likewise are not intended to limit the full scope of the invention.

Without being limiting, FIG. 1 shows an exemplary system 100 according to the present disclosure. The system 100 may comprise a device 102 and a terminal 110. The device 102 may comprise a communication port 106, and optionally a private key 104 and a crypto engine 108. The optional private key 104 may be stored in a non-volatile storage (not shown) of the device 102. The terminal 110 may comprise a communication port 112, a timer (or counter) 114, a processor 116, and optionally a crypto engine 118. Although the timer (or counter) 114 is shown as a separate component, in certain embodiments, the timer 114 may be implemented as part of the processor 116 (e.g., in software or hardware), or may be integrated into other components of the terminal 110. In embodiments where the crypto engines 108 and 118 are present, they may be implemented in hardware, software, or combination of hardware and software.

The communications ports 106 and 112 may communicate with each other by establishing a communication link 130. The link 130 may be a wireless communication link, a wired communication link or a combination of both. As a

non-limiting example, the communication ports **106** and **112** may be compatible ultra-short range (e.g., NFC or capacitance-based transceivers), short range (e.g., WiFi or Bluetooth transceivers), or long range (e.g., radio transceivers) communication ports that may be used to establish a wireless communication link **130** when the communication ports **106** and **112** are physically within a distance sufficient to establish a communication link. Those with skill in the art recognize that this distance may vary depending on the specific communication link utilized (e.g., NFC, Bluetooth, WiFi, radio, etc.). As another non-limiting example, the communication ports **106** and **112** may be communication interfaces for wired links, such as, USB connectors, IEEE 1394, RJ-45, etc., and the link **130** may be a wired link between the device **102** and the terminal **110**.

It is to be understood that the systems, methods and apparatuses of the present invention are broad enough to be applicable to any two electronic devices capable of communicating with one another (either directly or indirectly), and that they are not limited to any specific communication technology or implementation. For purposes of illustration only, the device **102** may be a mobile device (such as a mobile phone) or a key-card, and the terminal **110** may be a key card reader terminal. As another example, the device **102** may be a tracking device located on a car or carried by a person on bail, and the terminal **110** may be a monitoring station. It is also to be understood that the terminal **110** need not be a stationary device and that it, too, may be implemented in a mobile or portable form factor.

It is to be understood that ensuring or verifying that two devices are within a predetermined proximity and reducing or eliminating the risk of relay attacks may be complementary applications of the systems, methods and apparatuses of the present disclosure. For example, the present disclosure may be applicable to ensure not only that a monitored vehicle is within a predetermined proximity of a monitoring station, but that malicious or unauthorized relay techniques are not used to mislead the monitoring station into believing that the monitored vehicle is within the predefined proximity when in fact it is not.

FIG. 2A illustrates an exemplary method **200** that may be implemented by the terminal **110** to verify the proximity of the device **102** (e.g., to determine whether a device **102** is within or outside a predetermined or predefined physical proximity of the terminal **110**). The method **200** may start at block **202**, at which the terminal **110** may establish a communication link **130** with the device **102** to communicate data between the device and the terminal. The details of establishing such a data connection may depend on the particular type of wireless or wired (or combination of both) communication link **130** used in a particular implementation. In addition, an optional logical channel (such as TCP connection, X.25 connection, Sequenced Packet Exchange (SPX) connection, High-Level Data Link Control (HDLC) connection, SSL/TLS connection over any of these connections, or similar connection; in some embodiments, logical channel may consist of multiple TCP connections, X.25 connections, Sequenced Packet Exchange (SPX) connections, High-Level Data Link Control (HDLC) connections, SSL/TLS connections, other similar connections, or combinations of them) may be established over the communication link **130**.

At block **204**, a nonce may be generated. For example, a cryptographically safe random number generator (implemented in hardware (not shown) or implemented in software running on the processor **116**) may be used for this purpose.

At block **206**, the generated nonce may be sent to the device **102** and the timer **114** may be started to count time from when the nonce is sent.

The device **102** may implement an exemplary method **230** shown in FIG. 2B corresponding to the exemplary method **200**. At block **232**, the device **102** may receive the nonce. At block **234**, the device **102** may generate a value V . In one embodiment, the value V (which may also be referred to as the parameter V) may be generated using a random number generator (not shown) and may be a random number that cannot be predicted and/or computed outside the device **102**. In some embodiments, to speed up the processing within block **234**, the value V may be pre-generated (as long as it is not previously disclosed outside the device **102**). At block **236**, the value V (also referred to as a verification value) may be sent to the terminal **110**.

Referring back to the exemplary method **200** on FIG. 2A, at block **208**, the terminal **110** may receive the verification value from the device **102**, and at block **209** may determine the time τ elapsed from sending the nonce until receiving the verification value. At block **210**, the time τ may be compared to a predefined time threshold T_{th} . If the verification value is not received within the predefined time threshold T_{th} , then, from block **210**, the method **200** may proceed to block **218** (or, optionally, to block **214**).

The exemplary method **230** of FIG. 2B, in the meantime, may proceed from block **236** to block **238**, at which, the device **102** may compute a secondary value. The secondary value may be generated from the value of the nonce received at block **232**, the value V and may optionally include a measured time value t_x . For example, the secondary value may be a concatenation of the nonce, the value V and the optional time value t_x . In some embodiments, the secondary value may additionally include some other information, such as, for example, current date and time. As will be described in details below, the measured time value t_x may be a time period from when the device **102** receives a last symbol of the communication from the terminal **110** that transmits the nonce to when the device **102** starts sending a first reply symbol. In some embodiments, authenticating data for the secondary value may be generated. For example, the secondary value may be signed and/or encrypted with a private key of the device **102**. The signing or encryption at the device **102** may be performed, for example, by the optional crypto engine **108** or by the processor **116**. At block **240**, the device **102** may send the secondary value to the terminal **110**. If the secondary value is signed or encrypted by the device **102**, the secondary value may be sent with the authenticating data, for example, the signature or in its encrypted form.

It should be noted that while operations within block **238** may take a significant amount of time (for example, on the order of 0.01 to 0.1 second), it does not affect T_{th} , which may be limited only by the speed of block **234** (which, in some embodiments may be in the sub-nanosecond range when a pre-generated value V is used).

Referring back to the exemplary method **200** in FIG. 2A, if at block **210**, it is determined that the verification value is received within the predefined time threshold T_{th} , the method **200** may proceed to block **211**, at which the terminal **110** may receive the secondary value. Then, at block **212**, the terminal **110** may process the verification value and the secondary value by performing the exemplary processes shown in blocks **222**, **224** and **226**. For example, at block **222**, using a public key of the device **102** (e.g., the public key corresponding the optional private key **104**), the terminal **110** may authenticate the secondary value using the

authenticating data, such as, verifying the signature of (or decrypting) the received secondary value. At block **224**, the value of the nonce sent to the device **102** may be compared to the value of the nonce received as part of the secondary value from the device **102**. At block **226**, the terminal **110** may verify the secondary value, for example, by comparing the value V received at block **408** to the value V received as a part of the secondary value received at block **211**.

If all the checks in blocks **222-226** are successful, at block **213** the validation may be determined to be successful and the method **200** may proceed to block **216**, at which the method **200** may determine that the proximity verification has passed. If either the time check at block **210** or the validation determination at block **213** fails (for example, because of failing of any one of the checks at blocks **222-226**), the method **200** may proceed to block **218** (or optionally block **214**), at which the method **200** may determine that the proximity verification has failed.

Passing the proximity verification at block **216** may be interpreted as “the owner of the private key that corresponds to the public key used in block **211** is on the other end of the communication link established in block **202**, and within the proximity determined by the time threshold T_{th} .” In some embodiments, if the communication between the two communicating partners is through a protected channel (such as SSL/TLS connection(s) over the communication link), the method **200** may provide strong proximity and authentication assurances.

Those with skill in the art understand that the method **200** may be initiated by the device **102** to ensure that the terminal **110** is in close proximity, too. In certain embodiments, the same methods **200** and **230** may be performed by both sides of a communication link for mutual proximity verification.

It should be noted that other processes of establishing proximity may be used in place of methods **200** and **230**. For example, exemplary processes for establishing proximity may include those described in U.S. Provisional Patent Application 61/792,996, filed Mar. 15, 2013, entitled “Systems, Methods and Apparatuses for Ensuring Proximity of Communication Device,” the content of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

It should further be noted that, when signature of the secondary value is used, the signature may be implemented by encryption a hash of the secondary value, or by encrypting the whole or a part of the secondary value by the private key of the device **102**. If the whole or a part of the secondary value is encrypted, the signature verification may be implemented as decryption using a public key that corresponds to the private key of the device **102**.

FIG. 3A is a time sequence diagram illustrating communication signals according to the present disclosure. A modulated signal **310** may start with a preamble, which may be used to allow a receiver to synchronize with a transmitter. In an exemplary embodiment using WiFi communication according to the IEEE 802.11n standard, the preamble may take 16 μ s. A modulated signal **310** may comprise a plurality of symbols (e.g., symbol 1, symbol 2, symbol 3 or more that are not shown). Depending on modulation techniques, a symbol in the modulated signal **310** may represent different number of bits of information. For example, each symbol may represent three bits for 8 Quadrature Amplitude Modulation (8QAM), six bits for 64QAM, 2 bits for Quadrature Phase Shift Keying (QPSK) Modulation, and one bit for Binary Phase Shift Keying (BPSK) Modulation. In some embodiments, non-integer number of bits per symbol may also be possible. If a multi-carrier modulation method is used, each symbol may be on the order of hundreds of bits.

An exemplary multi-carrier modulation technique is orthogonal frequency-division multiplexing (OFDM)). If, for example, 48-subchannel OFDM with 64QAM within each channel is used, each OFDM symbol may contain up to 288 bits.

In one exemplary embodiment with WiFi communications according to the IEEE 802.11n standard, each OFDM symbol (including “guard interval”) may be 4 μ s long, while the carrier signal frequency may be, for example, 5 GHz (which is equivalent to the carrier period being 0.2 ns). That is, for every symbol transmitted, there may be 20000 cycles of the carrier signal. In case of single-carrier modulation (such as QAM modulation), the typical number of cycles per symbol may be significantly lower, for example, on the order of a few hundred carrier cycles per symbol.

FIG. 3B is a block diagram illustrating two partners engaging in communication according to the present disclosure. In the example shown in FIG. 3B, the communication link **130** may be implemented as a full-duplex link, i.e., as two logically separate links (**130A** and **130B**) performing transmission in different directions simultaneously. In some embodiments, the full-duplex link may be implemented by two separate antennas on the device **102** and two separate antennas on the terminal **110**, with each of the links **130A** and **130B** working on different frequencies. For example, the transmitters T_X and receivers R_X of both of the device **102** and the terminal **110** may have separate antennas. In some other embodiments, the full-duplex link may be implemented on the same frequency using multiple-input and multiple-output (MIMO) antennas, for example, as described in the book Digital Communication, by Edward A. Lee and David G. Messerschmit (1988) at pages 461-474 (which is incorporated herein by reference). Yet in some other embodiments, a single antenna may be used on either the device **102** or the terminal **110** to achieve the full-duplex link, for example, as described in Michael Knox, “Single antenna bidirectional radio communications,” Texas Wireless Summit 2011, Oct. 25, 2011 (which is incorporated herein by reference). In many cases, antennas used for such communications (and/or some other related elements, like oscillators, mixers, modulators/demodulators, etc.) may be the same antennas (and/or other related elements) that are normally used for WiFi communications.

FIG. 3C is a time sequence diagram illustrating communication signals for a request and a response being transmitted and received by two partners engaging in an exemplary communication according to the present disclosure. Each point in time may be referred to as a moment in the following description. Note that while it is described in terms of separate transmitting and receiving antennas, the same description is applicable to a full-duplex link implemented using the same antenna for both transmitting and receiving. As shown on FIG. 3C, at the moment **332**, a transmitting antenna of the terminal **110** may start transmission of a preamble for a request (e.g., the nonce); and at the moment **352**, it may start the transmission of the 1st symbol of the nonce (sym1A) over the link **130A**. At the moment **354**, a receiving antenna of the device **102** may start receiving the symbol sym1A over the link **130A**. The moment **354** may be slightly after the moment **352** due to the time it takes for radio waves to reach the device **102**. Then at the moment **360**, the transmitting antenna of terminal **110** may end the transmission of the last symbol of the nonce (symNA) over the link **130A**. It should be noted that in some embodiments, the nonce may be represented by a single symbol, so in this case N is one and only sym1A is transmitted. At the moment **362**, the receiving antenna of the

device 102 may end receiving the symbol symNA. The time difference between the moment 362 and moment 360 may be referred to as t_0 .

Meanwhile, the transmitting antenna of device 102 may start transmitting its own preamble. This moment is shown as the moment 342 on FIG. 3C. It should be noted that in some embodiments the moment 342 may occur before the moments 352-354, and even before the moment 332. After the preamble is transferred, the transmitting antenna of device 102 may start transmitting "padding symbols" which are not related to the nonce. These padding symbols may include, for example, repeated same pre-defined symbol, or some data to be transmitted from the device 102 to terminal 110. It should be noted that padding symbols are optional.

In some embodiments, when the device 102 is receiving symbols sym1A through symNA, it may collect timing information about the symbols and/or the carrier signal, so it may calculate with a high precision the exact moment 362 when it will end receiving the symbol symNA. After the predicted moment 362 occurs, the device 102 may start transmitting the 1st symbol sym1B of the response (e.g., the value V) over the link 130B. Note that if there is a delay d_t (such as a filter delay, etc.) between the moment when the transmission is logically started over the link 130B, and the moment when the actual transmission by a transmitting antenna of the device 102 is started, in some embodiments, such delays may be accounted for by logically starting transmission d_t earlier (which is possible in embodiments where the value V does not depend on the nonce). In some other embodiments, such delays may be accounted for by adding d_t to t_0 , which is described below. Solutions that combine the different approaches are also possible.

At time moment 370, a transmitting antenna of the device 102 may start the transmission of the first reply symbol sym1B. The difference between the moment 362 and moment 370 may be referred to as t_x . The time period t_x may consist of two parts: a fixed part and a variable part. The fixed part may include known delays within the device 102, such as delays of hardware components. In some embodiments, this fixed part of t_x may be negative, which in some cases may lead to t_x being negative, i.e. the moment 370 occurring before the moment 362. The variable part may consist of measurement errors and implementation inaccuracies within the device 102. In addition, if the modulated signal of the transmitting signal in link 130B is not synchronized with modulated signal in link 130A, the variable part of t_x may include up to the length of a padding symbol.

At the moment 372, a receiving antenna of the terminal 110 may start receiving the first reply symbol sym1B over the link 130B. The time difference between the moment 370 and moment 372 may be referred to as t_1 .

The terminal 110 may measure the interval τ between the moment 360 and moment 372. For example, in some embodiments the terminal 110 may need to take into account internal delays, similar to handling of d_t as described above for the device 102. As seen from FIG. 3C, $\tau = t_0 + t_x + t_1$. Here $(t_0 + t_1) \cdot c = 2 \cdot D$, wherein c is the speed of propagation of radio signal in air (which is well-known, and is approximately $2,989 \cdot 10^8$ m/s, a little bit less than the speed of light in a vacuum), and D is the distance (measured along the path that the radio signal have traversed) between the device 102 and terminal 110. This may allow (after taking into account the known fixed part of t_x) the terminal 110 to calculate D based on measured τ . Alternatively, the time threshold value T_{th} for the purpose of the process described with respect to FIGS. 2A and 2B may be pre-calculated based on the known c , t_x , and maximum allowed D . It should be noted that in

some embodiments, the fixed part of t_x may be minimized (as long as such minimization doesn't greatly affect the precision in measuring the moment 360) to reduce the likelihood of success for certain attacks.

In one embodiment, for example, when 4 μ s OFDM symbols are used, the possible inaccuracy of $t_0 + t_1$ determined according to the description above (without synchronization between carriers in link 130A and link 130B), may be roughly estimated on the order of 4-5 μ s (inaccuracy of 4 μ s may be caused by delay of up to 1 OFDM symbol, the rest may be caused by possible inaccuracies in the device 102 and terminal 110). That is, the inaccuracy of the determined $t_0 + t_1$ may be on the order of 4-5 μ s, which may translate into an inaccuracy of the determined distance D on the order of a few kilometers.

To improve accuracy of determined distance D , in some embodiments, synchronization between data streams in the link 130A and link 130B may be used. Such synchronization may be achieved, for example, by the device 102 choosing the moment 342 after it has received a full preamble from the terminal 110 over the link 130A, or choosing the moment 342 (or a moment of transmission of the 1st padding symbol) in a certain pre-defined relation to the stream received from the terminal 110. In this case, inaccuracy of the determined $t_0 + t_1$ may be roughly estimated as a sum of (a) inaccuracy of the determined moment 362 by the device 102, (b) inaccuracy of the determined moment 372 by the terminal 110, (c) inaccuracy of measurement of the time between the moment of synchronization between the streams (t_{sync} , not shown) and the moment 370, (d) inaccuracy of measurement of τ , and (e) other inaccuracies. In some embodiments, (a) and (b) may be of the same order of magnitude, and can be roughly estimated as $\text{symbol_time} \cdot 10^{-4}$, (c) and (d) may be roughly estimated as $(t_{370} - t_{sync}) \cdot 10^{-5}$ and $\tau \cdot 10^{-5}$ respectively, and (e) can be roughly estimated on the order of a few carrier cycles. For example, for 4 μ s OFDM symbols, τ may be on the order of 100 ns, and for synchronization between streams that has occurred 20 μ s before the moment 370, it may translate into inaccuracies on the order of $2 \cdot 4 \mu\text{s} \cdot 10^{-4} + (20 \mu\text{s} + 100 \text{ ns}) \cdot 10^{-5} + (0.2 \sim 0.6) \text{ ns} = 1.2 \sim 1.6 \text{ ns}$, which may translate into an inaccuracy of the determined distance D on the order of 10-15 centimeters. (The character \sim is intended to denote a range, e.g., "1.2-1.6" should be read to mean "1.2 to 1.6.") Such an accuracy level may allow embodiments using such technology in, for example, entry control devices or payment systems. It should be noted that all accuracy and inaccuracy estimates, which are provided in the present disclosure, are merely exemplary and should not be understood as limiting the scope of the present disclosure.

In some other embodiments, another method of improving accuracy of distance D may be used. In such embodiments, the device 102 may measure the time t_x between the moment 362 and moment 370, and add the time t_x as another field to the secondary value. Therefore, in such embodiments, the secondary value may comprise three fields: the nonce received at block 232, the value V, and the time t_x . In some embodiments, another similar time interval, which differs from the time t_x by a constant may be used instead. The constant may be, for example, well-known, or, in another example, may be well-known for each of types of device 102. Then the terminal 110, after receiving (and optionally decrypting) the secondary value, may obtain the time t_x and use it to calculate D . In this case ($t_0 + t_1$) may be calculated as $(\tau - t_x)$. Moreover, if the time interval included into the secondary value differs from t_x by a constant, this constant may need to be subtracted here as well. In such embodiments, inaccuracies may be roughly estimated as (a)

inaccuracy of determining the moment **362** by the device **102**, (b) inaccuracy of determining the moment **372** by the terminal **110**, (c) inaccuracy of measurement of t_x , (d) inaccuracy of measurement of τ , and (e) other inaccuracies. In some embodiments, (a) and (b) may be roughly estimated as described above, (c) and (d) may be roughly estimated as $t_x \cdot 10^{-5}$ and $\tau \cdot 10^{-5}$ respectively, and (e) may be roughly estimated on the order of a few carrier cycles. For example, if the OFDM symbols are used, with t_x and τ estimated on the order of $4 \mu\text{s}$ (one OFDM symbol), the inaccuracy may be on the order of $2 \cdot 4 \mu\text{s} \cdot 10^{-4} + 2 \cdot 4 \mu\text{s} \cdot 10^{-5} + (0.2 \sim 0.6) \text{ ns} = 1.1 \sim 1.5 \text{ ns}$, which may translate into an inaccuracy of the determined distance D on the order of $10 \sim 15$ centimeters.

In some of the embodiments where t_x is included into the secondary value, the terminal **110** may need to validate (for example, at block **212**) that the t_x received as a part of the secondary value is within a pre-defined limit. For example, the typical t_x may be expected to be on the order of $20 \mu\text{s}$ in a WiFi connection. Then, if the t_x in a received secondary value is much larger than expected, for example, in the millisecond range, it may indicate that device **102** may be compromised and/or that some kind of attack is under way.

In some embodiments, the moment **342** (when the device **102** starts transmitting a preamble) may occur after the moment **362** (when the device **102** receives the symbol symNA). In some cases, the same communication channel may be used for all the communications shown on FIG. 3C. For example, the communication between the terminal **110** and device **102** may be implemented as half-duplex communication or may use a channel shared by more than 2 stations. In some embodiments, both transmissions (from the terminal **110** to the device **102** and from the device **102** to the terminal **110**) may represent WiFi frames, separated by one of WiFi inter-frame times, for example, Short Inter-frame Space (SIFS) time. If half-duplex or a shared channel is used, it may lead to increase of time t_x (compared to t_x when full-duplex is used). For example, if WiFi channel is used, the value of t_x may be on the order of $20 \mu\text{s}$ (for example, in some embodiments it may be $2 \mu\text{s}$ SIFS time plus $16 \mu\text{s}$ preamble). This increased t_x may be handled as described above, for example, via increasing fixed portion of t_x , or via measuring interval t_x (or some other similar interval) and including the measured t_x into the secondary value. This increased value of t_x may lead to slightly increased inaccuracies. According to the calculations provided above, such additional inaccuracies may be on the order of $20 \mu\text{s} \cdot 10^{-5}$, or 0.2 ns , which may translate into an additional inaccuracy of the determined distance D on the order of a $1 \sim 2$ centimeters.

In some of the embodiments described in the present disclosure, the moment at which the beginning or end of the symbol is received may need to be determined with precision. In some embodiments, for example, if OFDM is used, high precision may be achieved, for example, by using position of fast Fourier transform (FFT) window. Any known FFT window position recovery techniques or those that may be developed in the future may be used, such as, for example, the techniques described in EPO patent application EP 2071787A1, U.S. Pat. No. 6,058,121, or U.S. Pat. No. 6,853,616, the content of each of which is incorporated herein by reference. In other embodiments, other (both existing and future) methods of determination of the moment of the beginning/end of the symbol being received, may be used. In another example, if direct QAM modulation is used rather than OFDM modulation, then in such

for example, QAM timing recovery module described in "Digital Communication," by Edward A. Lee and David G. Messerschmit (1988), the content of which is incorporated by reference in its entirety.

In some embodiments, to improve precision of time of receiving/adding symbol, multiple measurements may be performed. For example, in some embodiments more than one TransmissionA (each TransmissionA consisting of preamble and symbols transmitted from terminal **110** to device **102**) and/or more than one TransmissionB (each TransmissionB consisting of preamble and symbols transmitted from device **102** to terminal **110**) may be performed for the purposes of proximity verification, averaging time measurement results over transmissions in the same direction; in such cases each of transmissions may include a different nonce.

In some embodiments, proximity verification described above, may be performed over a WiFi channel (for example, over IEEE 802.11n 20 MHz channel, which normally uses OFDM symbols). In this case, in one non-limiting example, TransmissionA and/or TransmissionB may be implemented as specially introduced WiFi management frames, with these frames normally modulated according to 802.11n modulation rules as OFDM symbols, and separated, for example, with SIFS time as described above. In another non-limiting example, TransmissionA and/or TransmissionB may be implemented as special non-OFDM transmissions (for example, as QAM transmissions or BPSK/QPSK transmissions) within the same WiFi channel. In this case each transmission within the WiFi channel may be either OFDM transmission (for example, for usual WiFi communications) or non-OFDM transmission (for example, for proximity verification purposes).

The embodiments illustrated by FIGS. 1-3 may be used in proximity verification in point-to-point scenarios. However, before carrying out such proximity verification, in some embodiments it may be desirable for a terminal **110** to find out likely candidates for such proximity verification. For example, if the physical properties of a wireless communication are such that it may possibly reach devices within 100 meters (which is a typical radius for WiFi communication), there may be dozens of different devices within the physical range of the wireless connection. If the communication should be activated only if a device is within 20 cm of the terminal **110**, then verifying distances with all such devices within the physical range may in some cases be impractical or too energy-consuming.

FIG. 4A is a block diagram illustrating a system according to the present disclosure. As shown in FIG. 4A, a plurality of devices, **102A** to **102N** may be within a physical range of the terminal **110**. FIG. 4B is a time sequence diagram illustrating symbol timings for an exemplary method that may allow the terminal **110** to select likely candidate device (s) **102**. FIG. 5 is a flow diagram illustrating an exemplary method **500** for a likely candidate device **102** to be selected for further proximity verification according to the present disclosure. In some embodiments, after the likely candidate is selected, a more rigorous process (such as the process described with respect to FIGS. 2A and 2B) may be performed to perform the proximity verification.

The method **500** may start at block **502**, at which a broadcast packet may be broadcasted. In some embodiments, for example, the broadcast packet may be broadcasted periodically (for example, once per 0.1 sec or once per 1 sec). Also, the broadcast packet may be a special broadcast packet transmitted within a predefined frequency channel, which, for ease of reference, may be referred to as

11

channel A. The broadcast packet may include information such as, for example, the terminal type, terminal identifier (id), etc., as well as information about the structure of time slots (such as a time slot size and number of available time slots). In some embodiments, to allow different terminals to work within a close range, collision detection may be used by terminals (for example, with one randomly timed interval after such collision has been detected; other collision detection/prevention methods are also possible).

In some embodiments, a WiFi channel (for example, a 20 Mhz IEEE 802.11n channel) may be used as a channel A. In some further embodiments, a WiFi “beacon frame” may be used as the broadcast packet mentioned above, while in some other embodiments, an additional WiFi management frame may be introduced to represent the broadcast packet mentioned above. In some embodiments, the WiFi channel used as a channel A may be used exclusively for proximity verification purposes; in some other embodiments, the WiFi channel used as a channel A may be used both for proximity verification purposes and for usual WiFi data transmission purposes. In the latter case, some additional measures to ensure co-existence of proximity data with WiFi data, may be implemented, as described below.

After the broadcast has been made, at block 504, the terminal 110 may wait for a reply from any devices within a range of the wireless communication. At block 506, a reply may be received from one of the devices within the communication range. In some embodiments, such a reply may come within a pre-defined time slot. For example, as shown on FIG. 4B, after the broadcast packet, there may be a plurality of time slots. When a device sends a reply within a time slot M (M being any integer from one to N), the reply may be a special packet that may be time shifted (for example, by $M \times \text{time_slot_size}$) from when the end of the broadcast packet being sent by the terminal 110. In some

embodiments, the reply may comprise some information about the device sending the reply, for example, a device id. In some embodiments, length of time slots may be calculated in a way which ensures that replies sent by devices may not overlap regardless of position of devices, as long as the devices are within the physical range. For example, if the physical communication range is r , then time slot length may be chosen to exceed $T_{\text{reply}} + 2 \times r/c + T_{\text{inacc}}$, in which T_{reply} may be the time necessary to transmit a reply, and T_{inacc} may be reserved for inaccuracies, etc. The inaccuracies may include inaccuracies similar to the variable part of t_x described above. For example, if each reply takes 20 μs , the maximum inaccuracies is about 200 ns, and $r=100$ m (these exemplary values are expected to represent typical order of magnitude for a 802.11n communication), then $2 \times r/c$ may be around 670 ns, and the time slot length may be chosen to exceed 20870 ns, for example, as 21 μs .

After receiving the reply, at block 508, the terminal 110 may calculate a distance D from the terminal 110 to the device that has replied in the time slot M. In some embodiments, the terminal 110 may use the technique described with respect to FIG. 3C to determine the distance D. Then, based on the distance D, at block 510, the terminal 110 may identify this likely candidate device and proceed with proximity verification with this likely candidate (for example, as described with respect to FIG. 2 and/or FIG. 3B/3C).

In some embodiments, the number of the specific time slot used by a device may be determined by some pre-defined function of the device id and information broadcasted as a part of broadcast packet.

In some other embodiments, to allow different devices 102 to select different time slots, the following approach

12

may be used. Whenever a device 102 in FIG. 4A detects a first broadcast from the terminal 110, it may wait for all time slots to complete without transmitting anything. That is, if the broadcast and time slots after the broadcast may be referred to as a broadcast cycle, the device 102 does not reply during the first broadcast cycle. Then, the device 102 may make a random selection among the slots which were detected as “free” (without any device responding) during the first broadcast cycle, and uses this randomly selected slot to transmit its reply during the next (and subsequent) broadcast cycle(s) from the same terminal 110. There is a possibility for collision such that two devices may detected their first broadcasts at the same time and randomly select the same time slot. To address the collision issue, in some embodiments, a device 102 may monitor any collisions for its selected time slot, and when any collision is detected, the device 102 may re-select another time slot from the time slots detected as free during the previous broadcast.

It should be noted that in some embodiments, after the process described with respect to FIGS. 4A, 4B and 5 identifies a likely candidate, instead of performing the full process described with respect to FIG. 2 and FIG. 3B/3C, the terminal 110 may request only the signed secondary value (which, as described before, may still include the nonce and value V). In these embodiments, the broadcast packet may include the nonce, and the device reply packet may include the value V.

In embodiments where WiFi channel is used as a channel A and the same channel is used for the transmission of regular WiFi data, the following mechanism may be used in some embodiments to allow for co-existence of regular WiFi data with proximity broadcasts and slots. First, before replying to a time slot in a broadcast, each of devices 102 may request a time slot number from a terminal 102 using specially introduced management frames (or extending existing WiFi management frames, for example, association/re-association request/response). This time slot request/response may happen outside of the sequence shown on FIG. 4B. Then, when a broadcast frame (which may be, for example, a beacon frame, or a specially introduced frame) is sent by the terminal 110, each of devices 102 that already has an allocated time slot may transmit its reply.

In some embodiments, if the terminal 110 realizes that certain time interval (for example, comparable to SIFS time) within a time slot allocated for a certain device 102 has already passed, but none of devices 102 has started transmission, the terminal 110 may start transmission (for example, a frame containing some random data) itself, to fill the time slot. This may be necessary to ensure that other WiFi stations, which may have missed (or do not understand) broadcast frame, and are using standard WiFi transmission rules (which in general may allow transmission if a channel is idle for a few μs), do not interfere with the proximity detection process.

FIG. 6 shows a system 600 according to another exemplary embodiment of the present disclosure. The system 600 may include a device 102 and two terminals 110A and 110B. The two terminals 110A and 110B may be embodiments of the terminal 110 described above. The device 102 may perform a proximity verification procedure according to one of the techniques described above, with each of the terminals 110A and 110B. As part of the proximity verification process, each of the terminals 110A and 110B may calculate a distance D along a direct path to the device 102, shown as D_a and D_b in FIG. 6. Each of the terminals 110A and 110B may then send a “coordinates packet” to the device 102 comprising the distance D measured by each respective

terminal as well as the coordinates of the physical location of the respective terminal by, for example, using a special WiFi management frame. In one embodiment, the coordinates representing the physical location of the terminal may be represented as World Geodetic System (WGS) 84 or any other datum. In another embodiment, the coordinates may be specific to the system 600 in which the terminals are located (e.g., coordinate axes along length and width of the room in which the system 600 is located). Thus, for example, a “coordinates packet” sent from the terminal 110A to the device 102 may comprise X_a , Y_a (coordinates of terminal 110A) and distance D_a , and a “coordinates packet” sent from the terminal 110B to the device 102 may comprise X_b , Y_b , and D_b . In some embodiments, the terminals 110A and 110B may be populated with their respective coordinates information in advance.

Once the “coordinates packets” from both terminal 110A and 110B are received at the device 102, the device 102 may calculate its own coordinates. For example, using trilateration, $X_{dev} = X_a + \text{sgn}(X_b - X_a) * D_a * \sin(\alpha)$ (where $\text{sgn}()$ is the sign function extracts the sign of a real number); $Y_{dev} = Y_a - D_a * \cos(\alpha)$, wherein $\alpha = \arccos((Y_a - Y_b) / D_{ab}) - \arccos((D_{ab}^2 + D_a^2 - D_b^2) / (2 * D_{ab} * D_a))$, and $D_{ab} = \text{sqrt}((X_b - X_a)^2 + (Y_b - Y_a)^2)$ is the distance between terminals 110A and 110B.

It should be noted that device 102 may communicate with terminals 110A and 110B either in parallel or sequentially. It should further be noted that in some embodiments, for example, if proximity verification is performed only for the purpose of calculating coordinates, the proximity verification messages may omit signing the secondary value. It should further be noted that in some embodiments, instead of terminal 110A and terminal 110B performing proximity verification and then reporting their respective distances and coordinates, the device 102 may perform the proximity verification with the terminals 110A and 110B and calculate the distances D_a and D_b (while still receiving information about X_a , X_b , Y_a , Y_b from the respective terminals).

In some embodiments, trilateration may identify two different possible locations in which the device 102 may be located. The second possible point is shown as point 611 in FIG. 6, and the coordinates of the other point 611 may be calculated, for example, as $X_{dev} = X_b + \text{sgn}(X_b - X_a) * D_a * \cos(\beta)$; $Y_{dev} = Y_b + \text{sgn}(X_b - X_a) * D_a * \sin(\beta)$, wherein $\beta = \arctan((Y_a - Y_b) / (X_b - X_a)) + \arccos((D_{ab}^2 + D_b^2 - D_a^2) / (2 * D_{ab} * D_b))$ and D_{ab} is defined as above. Various techniques may be used to address this ambiguity, and to identify the location for device 102. In some embodiments, the “coordinates packets” that each of the terminal 110A and/or terminal 110B send to device 102, may indicate a range of possible coordinates for each respective terminal; for example, the possible coordinates may be restricted to an enclosed area, such as a room in which the system 600 is located in. In such an embodiment, if both terminal 110A and 110B are located along the same wall, this may be sufficient to allow the device 102 to exclude one of the two possible location points, thus leaving only one possible location point. In some other embodiments, more than two terminals 110 may be used to determine coordinates and various methods of the trilateration may be used in this case, for example, as described in “Quality of Trilateration: Confidence based Iterative Localization,” authored by Zheng Yang and Yunhao Liu, available at “<http://www.cse.ust.hk/~liu/QtT.pdf>,” “Minimizing Trilateration Errors in the Presence of Uncertain Landmark Positions,” authored by Alexander Bahr and John J. Leonard, available at “[14](http://ecmr07.informatik.uni-</p>
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freiburg.de/proceedings/ECMR07_0073.pdf,” and other trilateration techniques, both known in the art and developed in the future.

While specific embodiments and applications of the present invention have been illustrated and described, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the precise configuration and components disclosed herein. The terms, descriptions and figures used herein are set forth by way of illustration only and are not meant as limitations. Various modifications, changes, and variations which will be apparent to those skilled in the art may be made in the arrangement, operation, and details of the apparatuses, methods and systems of the present invention disclosed herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. By way of non-limiting example, it will be understood that the block diagrams included herein are intended to show a selected subset of the components of each apparatus and system, and each pictured apparatus and system may include other components which are not shown on the drawings. Additionally, those with ordinary skill in the art will recognize that certain steps and functionalities described herein may be omitted or re-ordered without detracting from the scope or performance of the embodiments described herein.

The various illustrative logical blocks, modules, circuits, and algorithm steps described in connection with the embodiments disclosed herein may be implemented as electronic hardware, computer software, or combinations of both. To illustrate this interchangeability of hardware and software, various illustrative components, blocks, modules, circuits, and steps have been described above generally in terms of their functionality. Whether such functionality is implemented as hardware or software depends upon the particular application and design constraints imposed on the overall system. The described functionality can be implemented in varying ways for each particular application—such as by using any combination of microprocessors, microcontrollers, field programmable gate arrays (FPGAs), application specific integrated circuits (ASICs), and/or System on a Chip (SoC)—but such implementation decisions should not be interpreted as causing a departure from the scope of the present invention.

The steps of a method or algorithm described in connection with the embodiments disclosed herein may be embodied directly in hardware, in a software module executed by a processor, or in a combination of the two. A software module may reside in RAM memory, flash memory, ROM memory, EPROM memory, EEPROM memory, registers, hard disk, a removable disk, a CD-ROM, a DVD or any other form of storage medium known in the art.

The methods disclosed herein comprise one or more steps or actions for achieving the described method. The method steps and/or actions may be interchanged with one another without departing from the scope of the present invention. In other words, unless a specific order of steps or actions is required for proper operation of the embodiment, the order and/or use of specific steps and/or actions may be modified without departing from the scope of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus, comprising:

a communication port; and

a processor coupled to the communication port, the processor configured to:

send a request to a communication partner and receive a response from the communication partner via the communication port;

measure a time period from the request being sent to the response being received;

15

receive a secondary value from the communication partner via the communication port, the secondary value comprising at least a portion of the request, at least a portion of the response, and a measured time interval from when the communication partner receives a last symbol of the request to when the communication partner starts sending a first symbol of the response, and the secondary value having been sent with authenticating data to authenticate the secondary value;

authenticate the secondary value using the authenticating data and verify that the portion of the request and the portion of the response are included in the secondary value; and

compare the time period with a predefined threshold, wherein the predefined threshold is calculated based on a predefined maximum allowed distance to the communication partner, wherein the request and response are transmitted by modulated signals, wherein each of the modulated signals comprises one or more symbols and the request and response are transmitted by the one or more symbols, and the time period is measured using timings of the one or more symbols.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the communication port is a WiFi transceiver, and the modulated signal is a WiFi signal.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the one or more symbols are Quadrature Amplitude Modulation (QAM) symbols.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the one or more symbols are orthogonal frequency-division multiplexing (OFDM) symbols.

5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the communication port is configured to use half-duplex communication to send the request and receive the response.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the time period is measured using positions of fast Fourier transform (FFT) window.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the predefined threshold is also calculated based on a delay value.

8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the delay value is a predefined value.

9. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the secondary value includes the delay value.

10. An apparatus, comprising:

a communication port; and

circuit components configured to:

receive a request via the communication port from a communication partner;

send a response via the communication port to the communication partner;

generate a secondary value that includes at least a portion of the request, at least a portion of the response, and a measured time interval from when the communication partner receives a last symbol of the request to when the communication partner starts sending a first symbol of the response;

generate authenticating data to authenticate the secondary value; and

send the secondary value and the authenticating data to the communication partner via the communication port, wherein the request and response are transmitted by modulated signals, wherein each of the modulated signals comprises one or more symbols, and the request and response are transmitted by the one or more symbols of the modulated signals.

16

11. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the communication port is a WiFi transceiver, and the modulated signal is a WiFi signal.

12. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the one or more symbols are Quadrature Amplitude Modulation (QAM) symbols.

13. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the one or more symbols are orthogonal frequency-division multiplexing (OFDM) symbols.

14. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the communication port is configured to use half-duplex communication to receive the request and send the response.

15. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the circuit components are further configured to prepare the response in advance and to start sending the response at a time based on timing of the received one or more symbols of the request.

16. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the circuit components are further configured to start preparation of the response at a time based on timing of the received one or more symbols of the request, to calculate time spent on preparation of the response, and to generate the secondary value at least in part based on the calculated time spent on preparation of the response.

17. A method for an apparatus to ensure proximity of a wireless communication partner, comprising:

sending a request to the communication partner and receive a response from the communication partner via a communication port of the apparatus;

measuring a time period from the request being sent to the response being received;

receiving a secondary value from the communication partner via the communication port, the secondary value comprising at least a portion of the request and at least a portion of the response, and the secondary value having been sent with authenticating data to authenticate the secondary value and a measured time interval from when the communication partner receives a last symbol of the request to when the communication partner starts sending a first symbol of the response; authenticating the secondary value using the authenticating data and verify that the portion of the request and the portion of the response are included in the secondary value; and

comparing the time period with a predefined threshold, wherein the predefined threshold is calculated based on a predefined maximum allowed distance to the communication partner, wherein the request and response are transmitted by modulated signals, wherein each of the modulated signals comprises one or more symbols and the request and response are transmitted by the one or more symbols, and the time period is measured using timings of the one or more symbols.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the communication port is a WiFi transceiver, and the modulated signal is a WiFi signal.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the one or more symbols are Quadrature Amplitude Modulation (QAM) symbols.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein the one or more symbols are orthogonal frequency-division multiplexing (OFDM) symbols.

21. The method of claim 17, wherein the request is sent and the response is received by half-duplex communication.

22. The method of claim 17, wherein the time period is measured using positions of fast Fourier transform (FFT) window.

17

23. The method of claim 17, wherein the predefined threshold is also calculated based on a delay value.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the delay value is a predefined value.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein the secondary value includes the delay value.

26. A method for an apparatus to ensure its proximity to a wireless communication partner, comprising:

receiving a request from the communication partner via a communication port of the apparatus;

sending a response via the communication port to the communication partner;

generating a secondary value that includes at least a portion of the request, at least a portion of the response, and a measured time interval from when the communication partner receives a last symbol of the request to when the communication partner starts sending a first symbol of the response;

generating authenticating data to authenticate the secondary value; and

sending the secondary value and the authenticating data to the communication partner via the communication port, wherein the request and response are transmitted by modulated signals, wherein each of the modulated signals comprises one or more symbols, and the request

18

and response are transmitted by the one or more symbols of the modulated signals.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the communication port is a WiFi transceiver, and the modulated signal is a WiFi signal.

28. The method of claim 26, wherein the one or more symbols are Quadrature Amplitude Modulation (QAM) symbols.

29. The method of claim 26, wherein the one or more symbols are orthogonal frequency-division multiplexing (OFDM) symbols.

30. The method of claim 26, wherein the request is sent and the response is received by half-duplex communication.

31. The method of claim 26, further comprising:

preparing the response in advance; and
starting to send the response at a time based on timing of the received one or more symbols of the request.

32. The method of claim 26, further comprising:
starting preparation of the response at a time based on timing of the received one or more symbols of the request;

calculating time spent on preparation of the response; and
generating the secondary value at least in part based on the calculated time spent on preparation of the response.

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